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## Latin America Review

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30 August 1985

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ALA LAR 85-019  
30 August 1985

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Latin America  
Review [redacted]

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Articles have been coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA.  
Comments and queries regarding this publication may be directed to the Chief,  
Production Staff, Office of African and Latin American Analysis, [redacted]

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## Articles

### Honduras: Pressures on the Military

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Senior military officers have maintained their political neutrality and kept electoral preparations largely on track so far, but face serious challenges in fulfilling their commitment to fair elections in November. We believe Armed Forces Chief Lopez is committed to building Honduras's image as a modern democracy and that the military will continue to resist efforts by politicians—particularly President Suazo—to postpone the election. The factionally divided Armed Forces, however, will remain vulnerable to manipulation and the high command is likely to come under even greater pressure to take a more direct political role as the election approaches.

#### Military Guarantee

The military most recently entered the political fray in May, when it ended a two-month confrontation between Suazo and his congressional opponents, who were seeking to curtail his manipulation of the electoral process.

some senior officers, fearing that the dispute was harming Honduras's economy and international image, wanted General Lopez to end the crisis quickly by removing either Suazo or the dissident congressmen. Lopez resisted, however, and while publicly pledging his support for Suazo, assembled a coalition of labor, business, peasant, and church leaders that pressed the President to compromise. In our judgment, Lopez's subsequent offer to "help, guide, and collaborate with any group" to maintain electoral order was intended to put politicians on notice that the Armed Forces would stick by its guarantee of the election. In addition, the Embassy reports that the military-backed compromise has greatly opened up the political process and contributed to the formation of new coalitions within the country's two deeply divided parties.

Since the May confrontation, Lopez has continued to play a central role in policing political tensions,

Lopez continues to favor dialogue and consensus building over military intimidation. His public criticism of politicians seeking to postpone the election has drawn strong popular support, according to the Embassy. Earlier in August, a coalition of labor and peasant leaders similar to one that helped mediate the dispute in May pledged its support for the military's position after a meeting with senior officers.

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#### Politicization of the Military

The Armed Forces, however, are not immune to meddling from civilian politicians. The high command is aware that some politicians, including the lameduck President, are attempting to disqualify the three leading presidential candidates and use claims of voter registration fraud to increase pressure on officers to postpone the elections.

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Suazo reportedly would like to create such political chaos that the military has no choice but to delay elections to rectify procedural inadequacies and calm the political climate. We believe the President and Ricardo Zuniga, the discredited former president of the opposition National Party—both of whom have lost influence as younger, more popular party leaders surge ahead in the polls—are deliberately exacerbating internal party tensions in order to limit the ability of front-runners to consolidate their power bases.

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**Secret****Outlook**

We believe the military—and Lopez in particular—will work hard to ensure that fair elections are held on schedule. Although the Armed Forces probably can influence Congress and the Supreme Court to prevent the disruptive disqualification of candidates, senior officers are likely to have a tougher time countering politicians' claims that voter registration fraud makes honest elections impossible. Any investigation could expose irregularities that are not quickly and easily rectifiable, thereby undermining the credibility of the electoral process. [ ]

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Factional tensions within the Armed Forces are likely to continue to offer opportunities for meddling by politicians. [ ]

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[ ] who make up the Superior Defense Council. Moreover, internal tensions reportedly have been aggravated by a recent dispute over foreign assignments between the Fifth and Sixth Promotion classes.<sup>1</sup> Thus far, Lopez has defused tensions by chairing face-to-face discussions between disputing parties, but we believe animosities between various factions will not fade and, in fact, may increase as the election approaches. [ ]

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Lopez's personal leadership will remain critical to fending off pressures for an election postponement. Although we believe no faction in the military currently is capable of removing Lopez, the maneuvering by politicians will continue to threaten military unity and could force Lopez to back off from his commitment. [ ]

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Suazo, in particular, is likely to continue efforts to woo the powerful Fifth Promotion. These officers control the "coup battalions" around the capital and have enjoyed relatively close relations with Suazo since they ousted—apparently with the President's support—Armed Forces Chief Alvarez in March 1984, according to the Embassy. The Fifth fears that their close association with Suazo will work against them, especially if Jose Azcona, the current Liberal Party front-runner and the President's most formidable critic, is elected. This probably gives Suazo additional leverage. Lopez currently appears able to manage these tensions, but we believe the Fifth may weaken his ability to respond forcefully to Suazo's maneuvering by further dividing and politicizing the military. [ ]

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<sup>1</sup> Fifth Promotion officers are colonels occupying many of the most influential positions in and around the capital. Their independent decisionmaking practices have angered the high command on occasion, and the extended terms they have given themselves in their current positions have frustrated the Lieutenant Colonels from the Sixth Promotion. [ ]

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## Argentina-USSR: Soviet Arms Sales Overtures

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Moscow has renewed its longstanding offer to sell military equipment—including fighter and transport aircraft—to the [redacted]

[redacted] Thus far, the Argentine Government has responded coolly, but at least some factions within the military appear to be showing mild interest in Soviet technology. [redacted]

### Strings Attached

One of the more recent overtures occurred last November when, [redacted] the Soviets offered to sell the Argentine Air Force 30 to 36 MIG-23 or MIG-25 fighter aircraft. The USSR offered attractive credit terms and guaranteed to underbid the price of any comparable fighter on the international market. [redacted] however, Moscow placed severe conditions on the sale, stipulating that:

- All Argentine officer and NCO training must take place in the Soviet Union.
- Argentina must offer Moscow all of its agricultural exports before placing them on the international market.
- Buenos Aires must permit a large Soviet support mission, including pilots, to be stationed in Argentina.

Buenos Aires was unresponsive, and Soviet officials have since adopted a more low-key approach, including promotional demonstrations of at least two types of transport aircraft in Argentina. [redacted]

Notwithstanding the conditions attached, one Army and two Air Force pilots recently went to Peru to fly and evaluate Soviet-made MI-8 helicopters and SU-22 fighter aircraft. [redacted]

[redacted] In addition [redacted] may have taken advantage of his visit to Lima for President Garcia's inauguration to inspect Peru's Soviet-made army materiel. [redacted]

### Pros and Cons

Argentina's present financial bind could make it vulnerable to Soviet overtures. Moscow is pressuring Buenos Aires to redress the current trade imbalance between the two countries, and arms transfers present a practical solution. The Argentine military is reeling from sharp cutbacks in the defense budget and has been unable to replace failing equipment, let alone modernize its inventory. The armed forces have considered buying Western-made equipment, such as the French-built Mirage fighter, but high prices and short terms for payment have prevented such purchases. [redacted]

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Despite these considerations, the military remains, in our view, staunchly anti-Communist and suspicious of Soviet motives. [redacted]

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leaders have also observed Peru's relationship with the Soviets and want to avoid the maintenance, training, and logistics dependence inherent in a weapons agreement with Moscow. The Argentine military has not been impressed with the technical quality of Soviet arms and would prefer to acquire Western equipment compatible with existing inventory, [redacted]

[redacted] Moreover, the Alfonsin administration attaches great importance to good relations with the United States and would almost certainly not want to jeopardize the current rapprochement with Washington. [redacted]

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### The Stakes for the US

We believe that Buenos Aires will continue to resist Soviet offers of combat arms at least over the near term. Argentina's need to reduce its trade imbalance with Moscow may spur military-related purchases

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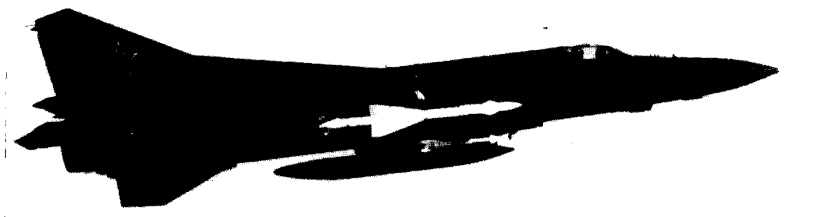
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*MIG-23 Flogger fighter aircraft.* ☐

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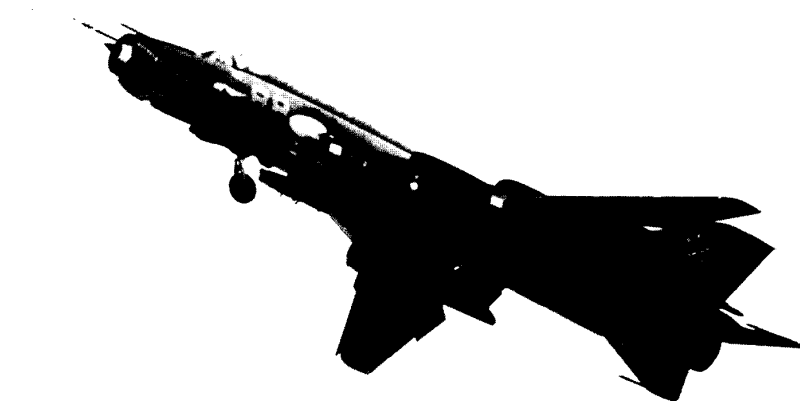
*MI-8 HIP military helicopter.* ☐

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*SU-22 Fitter fighter aircraft.* ☐

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from the USSR, but they are likely to be restricted to dual-use or low-technology items which would not require Soviet training or maintenance. Argentina may, however, threaten to purchase Soviet combat weapons to pressure the United States to act on at least two pending transfer issues:



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- Argentina is seeking military coproduction agreements with US firms to resuscitate domestic defense industries.

Over the longer term, however, if Argentine military equipment and capabilities continue to deteriorate at the current rate, and financial strictures endure, Buenos Aires may consider Soviet offers more favorably. 

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## Haiti: Increasing Church-State Tensions

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The Catholic Church, stronger and more assertive today than at any time in its existence, is increasingly challenging the Duvalier government on a number of social and political issues. In the absence of an organized and effective political opposition, the church reportedly views itself as the only institution capable of performing that function. Although US Embassy reports indicate that President Jean Claude Duvalier and the church hierarchy want to avoid a direct confrontation, the possibility is high that, over the near term, a small incident could escalate and provoke a brutal government crackdown on its clerical critics.

### Growing Church Activism

Tensions between the government and the church have increased steadily in recent months in response to open criticism of the Duvalier regime by some members of the clergy.<sup>1</sup> Several recent incidents have fueled tensions:

- In February, an unexpectedly large church-sponsored protest march in Port-au-Prince surprised and frightened the government, according to Embassy reporting. Although the government granted permission for the march, Haitian officials reportedly did not expect the 80,000 participants or the Archbishop's delivery of a fiery, 45-minute speech demanding an end to torture and greater economic and social justice. The US Embassy received reports from Haitian officials that the President's advisers pressed for an immediate crackdown on the church. the President was particularly shaken by the size of the march and the crowd's enthusiastic reaction to the Archbishop's speech.
- In April, the Bishop of Jeremie vehemently criticized affluent government officials in a speech at a youth council meeting in that city; the audience

<sup>1</sup> Although 80 percent of Haiti's population of nearly 6 million is Catholic and Catholicism is the official state religion, most Haitians also believe in voodoo—an African-oriented animist religion—which they practice along with Catholicism.

responded favorably, and the Catholic radio station, Radio Soleil, broadcasted the Bishop's address nationwide and sold cassettes of the speech.

- That same month, a Volunteer for National Security militiaman fired a shot at a priest during a ceremony in Port-au-Prince's cathedral; the Minister of State for Public Relations apologized to the Archbishop, and the militiaman was disciplined, according to US Embassy reporting.

- In June, sermons by priests in the countryside increasingly included harsh criticism of the regime, according to US Embassy reports. According to the Embassy, the Archbishop apologized to Duvalier stating that the Church cannot control all of its elements.

- In July, the Haitian church was a leading critic of Duvalier's national referendum on a series of reforms that would create the post of Prime Minister and legalize political parties; the bishops declared the referendum illegal and propagandistic, while Radio Soleil charged that voter fraud was blatant and widespread.

A US Embassy source indicates that the visit of Pope John Paul II in March 1983 was the catalyst for increasing church activity. During the Pontiff's visit, he bluntly criticized conditions in Haiti and, according to press reports, seemed to encourage the church to take an active role in fighting political abuses and social inequalities connected with the Duvalier family's 28-year rule.

The Archbishop and the other six Haitian bishops issued a pastoral letter in April 1983 reaffirming the church's intention to play an active role in social

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President Duvalier with Pope John Paul II. [redacted] Wide World ©

change, even when such issues are considered political by the government.<sup>2</sup> The letter, which was read in Catholic churches throughout Haiti and published as a booklet for wider distribution, nonetheless was vague concerning specific actions contemplated. Although no official government reaction to the bishops' letter was issued openly, the regime may have passed a private warning to the church. In May 1984 the bishops asked for the resignation of the US-born priest who directed Radio Soleil—the most outspoken media critic of the government. According to the Embassy, the bishops dismissed the outspoken priest to avert a confrontation with authorities in Port-au-Prince. [redacted]

By late last year, the church and the government had begun to clash on other issues. The government arrested 20 Haitians in November and charged them

<sup>2</sup> According to Embassy reporting, three of Haiti's seven bishops actively oppose the regime, two are cautiously critical, and two are conservative, pro-Duvalier. Although the bishops may hold differing views personally, they apparently speak publicly with one voice when it comes to church policy in Haiti. They probably also are under pressure from the Vatican to continue to speak out on human rights issues. [redacted]

with plotting to kill Duvalier and other officials. Among those detained were three members of the church's Diocesan institute for Adult Education. Officials of the institute denied that the three had engaged in subversive activity. In December, when a priest in Cap-Haitien's cathedral read a communique from Haiti's bishops expressing concern about the arrests, the city's prefect—accompanied by police—grabbed the microphone from him. The prefect's public apology for the incident several days later averted a conflict with the church. Five months later, the government released all those arrested in the November plot. [redacted]

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According to Embassy reporting, the Bishop of Cap-Haitien is an effective critic of the government and has the best organized diocese in Haiti. We believe the government fears him more than any other bishop. [redacted]

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[redacted] priests in the north generally preach more politics than religion and are attempting to incite the population against the government. Typical of these sermons, according to the Embassy, was a recent homily by a Belgian priest who denounced abuses by politicians and the militia and condemned the wealthy and powerful Haitian elite. Embassy sources indicate that areas of northern Haiti, especially Cap-Haitien, traditionally have been volatile and antagonistic to Port-au-Prince. [redacted]

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An increasing number of priests—foreign and native—regard antigovernment political activism as part of their religious duties.<sup>3</sup> This activism appears to have been stimulated primarily by the Pope's visit in 1983 and the subsequent prodding from the Haitian church hierarchy. We see no evidence to date suggesting that radical liberation theologians are involved. Church leaders also have denied the presence of any Marxist or liberation theologians among the Haitian clergy. [redacted]

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<sup>3</sup> Roughly half of the 600 priests in Haiti are Haitian; the rest are Belgian, Canadian, or US missionaries. The clergy has become increasingly native in character since the Duvalier family came to power. [redacted]

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### **The Religious Opposition**

*Radio Soleil. The Catholic Church's radio station, established in 1978, which often broadcasts political views criticizing the government and alleging human rights violations. The station has a large loyal audience nationwide. Its employees have occasionally been harassed by the government in the past.* [ ]

*Diocesan Institute for Adult Education (IDEA). A Catholic organization founded in 1973 to train Haitians in agricultural production, health care, and literacy. Its founder says nuns and layworkers train about 5,000 adults a year for periods ranging up to six months. The Embassy reports that IDEA personnel travel throughout Haiti, even though the group's activities are concentrated in Cap-Haitien. IDEA is funded by grants from the Inter-American Foundation and other private volunteer organizations, as well as the Catholic Church.* [ ]

*The Protestant Churches. Numerous Protestant denominations such as the Episcopal Church, Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, and Mennonites collectively claim about 10 percent of Haiti's population as followers. They operate schools, hospitals, printing plants, and workshops. In general, the Protestant sects avoid direct involvement in politics. The Protestant-run station, Radio Lumiere, however, has broadcast views critical of the government, although not as aggressively as Radio Soleil. In June, The Protestant Committee for Literacy and Literature agreed with the government on behalf of the Protestant churches to establish a literacy plan separate from the Catholic Church's program.* [ ]

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### **The Government Response**

Until recently, the Duvalier regime had taken care to avoid a politically damaging confrontation with the church. Earlier this year, for example, Foreign Minister Estime assured the US Ambassador that the government opposes such a confrontation but that problems arise because the church cannot control its activist priests and organizations. Moreover, in April the government signed an agreement with the church on its literacy campaign, pointing to a desire for cooperation. [ ]

Beginning in June, however, the government has abruptly toughened its response to perceived challenges from the church, and relations have deteriorated. We believe this resulted primarily from the regime's sensitivity to the church's criticism of the referendum in July. The crackdown may also reflect recommendations from some of Duvalier's advisers, who—according to US Embassy reports—are alarmed at the growing pattern of hostile sermons by priests, and have counseled for harsher countermeasures. According to the US Embassy, the government announced four days after the referendum that it had expelled three Belgian priests, one of whom was the new director of Radio Soleil. The priests were accused of violating Haitian immigration laws. The church retaliated by refusing to admit militiamen to Port-au-Prince's cathedral for ceremonies celebrating the 27th anniversary of the militia. [ ]

The regime took other steps in June to curb the church's influence:

- The President told the US Ambassador in June that he had expressed his concern to the Archbishop about activist priests, whom he dismissed as misinformed meddlers in political affairs. Duvalier stated that he told the Archbishop his government had detailed information about corruption among church officials that might reach into the hierarchy. In an implied threat to the Archbishop, Duvalier said he would make this information public if necessary.
- Also in June, the government signed a literacy accord with the Protestant churches of Haiti. We believe this agreement represents an attempt to dilute the prestige and authority accruing to the Catholic Church from its literacy program. [ ]

### **Outlook**

As the pace of political activity quickens in response to recent reforms, we expect the mutual distrust between the church and the Duvalier regime to deepen, increasing the possibility for conflict over the

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near term. We concur with the US Embassy that there is a real and growing danger that any one incident could cause a serious confrontation.

Considering the government's missteps in conducting the recent referendum, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the regime might overreact in handling any perceived problem arising from the church. [REDACTED]

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Duvalier often does not receive or ignores unfavorable reports concerning popular discontent and that his closest advisers manipulate information to their own advantage when briefing him. We believe these advisers will continue counseling the President to move against the church. Nevertheless, we believe Duvalier realizes that a large-scale crackdown on the church would destroy his efforts to improve Haiti's international image. [REDACTED]

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We also agree with the US Embassy that the church hierarchy and a majority of the clergy do not want a confrontation with the government despite increased church activism. At the same time, Embassy reporting points to growing tension within the church between moderate critics of the government and younger clerics who want to see it ousted. The Duvalier regime almost certainly will try to exploit such divisiveness. The greatest danger of confrontation arises from the activities of a small core of antigovernment priests and the possibility that an often misinformed President will overreact in dealing with them. [REDACTED]

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## Uruguay: Prospects for the Blanco Party [ ]

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The left-of-center Blanco Party, led by popular veteran politician Wilson Ferreira, has been working to rebuild its strength and moderate its image following its defeat in national elections last November. Although these efforts appear to be making headway, we believe the Blancos' prospects are heavily dependent on the 68-year-old Ferreira's personal leadership. [ ]

### Background: Election Setback

The Blancos, also known as the National Party, are one of Uruguay's three major political groups. Like its main rivals—President Sanguinetti's moderate Colorado Party and the leftist Broad Front—the Blanco Party is composed of several factions. The largest is a left-of-center grouping headed by Ferreira, who also serves as the Party's president. The other Blanco factions range in ideology from middle-of-the-road to conservative. [ ]

Even though the military government barred the charismatic Ferreira from running for the presidency and jailed him when he returned from exile in June 1984, the Blancos thought they could win the election, according to US Embassy [ ]

Instead, the party ticket, headed by stand-in presidential candidate Alberto Zumaran, finished second, with 33 percent of the vote compared to 39 percent for Sanguinetti and the Colorados. Congressional seats were apportioned among the parties according to their popular vote totals, leaving the Blancos with 11 seats in the 30-member Senate and 35 seats in the 99-member Chamber of Deputies. The party's share of the popular vote and congressional seats fell short of its showing in Uruguay's last presidential election in 1971, which also was won by the Colorados. [ ]

### Postelection Strategy

According to US Embassy [ ]  
[ ], Blanco leaders have drawn two conclusions from the election results. First, Wilson Ferreira's active leadership is crucial to the success of the party, and second, the Uruguayan electorate prefers a more moderate approach over a leftist one. [ ]

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Many Blancos believe Ferreira's detention was the main reason for the disappointing showing. [ ]  
[ ] serious infighting during his five-month imprisonment, as various Blanco politicians vied to fill the leadership vacuum. This squabbling undermined party unity during the campaign and almost certainly cost the Blancos a significant number of votes. [ ]

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Blanco leaders believe the Colorado victory showed that most Uruguayans will not support leftist parties, according to the US Embassy [ ].  
Ferreira's 32-year-old son Juan Raul, who was jailed along with his father in June but released two months later, attempted to act as party leader during the last three months of the campaign. [ ]

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[ ] Juan Raul Ferreira, whose views are considerably to the left of his father's, gave the party a decidedly leftist image during the campaign. [ ]

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Based on this assessment, the Blancos have changed their strategy. With Wilson Ferreira restored to his position as the party's undisputed leader, the Blancos are trying to play the role of a moderate democratic opposition, according to the US Embassy. [ ]

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[ ] Ferreira intends to

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**Main Blanco Party Factions**

Faction	Leaders/Supporters	Comment
Por La Patria (PLP)	Wilson Ferreira	Largest faction; leftist orientation.
Oliu-Posadas Subfaction	Rev. Juan Martin Posadas	Most leftwing group in PLP.
Ortiz-Pivel Subfaction		More moderate than mainstream PLP; seeking rapprochement with Herrerista factions.
Corriente Popular Nacionalista (CPN)	Juan Raul Ferreira	Splinter group of PLP; represents leftist Blanco youth.
Consejo Nacional Herrerista (CNH)	Luis Alberto Lacalle	Moderate faction; gaining influence within party.
Union Nacional Herrerista (UNH)	Dardo Ortiz	Most conservative faction; anti-Ferreira.
Movimiento Nacional de Rocha (MNR)	C. J. Pereira	Moderate; moving away from Ferreira's leadership; seeking rapprochement with CNH/UNH.

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continue cooperating with the Sanguinetti government, hoping that the Colorados—who lack a majority in the Congress—will grow increasingly dependent on the Blancos to govern. So far, the Blancos have kept opposition in the legislature to a minimum, and Wilson Ferreira has made several public statements supporting the government. The Blancos also have accepted a number of high-level government posts, and they are working, with some success, to develop support within labor and student groups, according to US Embassy sources.

In Ferreira's absence, squabbling among Blanco factions would almost certainly intensify. Ferreira's son is jockeying for position as the party's next leader—who would be chosen through internal party elections. US Embassy [ ] indicate however, that Juan Raul's abrasive leadership style and leftist connections, including contacts with Cuban officials, have alienated moderate Blancos. If he succeeded his father as party president, we believe that many moderate and conservative members would leave the party, with some joining the Colorados and others forming their own political groups. [ ]

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**Looking Beyond Ferreira**

In our view, and that of the US Embassy, Wilson Ferreira is currently the only leader with broad support among the various Blanco factions. For now, we expect the party to continue on its present path of moderation under Ferreira's leadership because most Blancos appear to believe that such an approach offers the best hope for victory in upcoming elections.

Another Blanco leader who would like to succeed Wilson Ferreira, [ ] is Senator Luis Alberto Lacalle, 44, leader of a centrist faction. Lacalle's following is considerably smaller than Wilson Ferreira's, but new supporters from within the party are rallying to Lacalle's moderate stance, [ ]. If he became the

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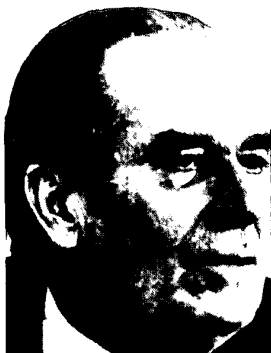
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*Wilson Ferreira, leader of the  
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party's chief, we would expect the Blancos to move further toward the center. Under such circumstances, Juan Raul Ferreira might well break away and form a new leftist party.

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Latin America  
Briefs

Mexico	More Trouble for the Left [redacted]	25X1
	Dissension is rife within Mexico's largest leftist group, the Communist-dominated Unified Socialist Party [redacted] Party leaders reportedly are engaged in mutual recriminations over their disappointing performance in midterm elections last July, when they attracted less than 4 percent of the vote. They also are divided over how closely to work with other leftist parties and how best to oppose what they consider to be the de la Madrid administration's increasingly moderate domestic policies. [redacted]	25X1
	The party, long divided along ideological and factional lines, lost about 25 percent of its electoral support as a result of a major schism that led many members to defect earlier this year. It also has been weakened by government favoritism for rival groups and the unwillingness of Cuba and the USSR to provide more than token assistance. Party leaders are unlikely to resolve their internal differences or to develop a united front with other leftist parties in the foreseeable future. [redacted]	25X1



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